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January 8, 2010

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Docket No. 09-191

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

As an elected Arkansas officeholder and an African-American, I am most concerned by the rulemaking set forth in the FCC Docket No. 09-191, *In the Matter of Preserving the Open Internet*. As broadband technology becomes more mobile and economically important, we must focus on tearing down barriers to broadband access and adoption, especially within the minority community. We have seen substantial growth in minority use of the Internet, and more must be done in this regard. I am among those who are working to ensure both greater access to broadband and adoption of it by all the people of southeast Arkansas.

The FCC can provide a great service by encouraging people everywhere to embrace technology while encouraging companies to continue expanding their broadband service in poor and underserved communities. However, the FCC proposal to impose "net neutrality" regulations could thwart that effort -- by slowing broadband expansion, raising consumer costs, or both. That would further isolate minority families who don't have broadband, and could force those who have broadband service to give it up for cost reasons. I know that is not the goal of the FCC, but it is a potential outcome of regulations proposed in Docket 09-191.

I hope we can work together to develop reasonable policy that will ensure competition, innovation and growth, especially during this time of economic strain. I sincerely thank Chairman Genachowski for his recent visit to our state and thank all of you for your time and consideration. I look forward to monitoring your deliberations on this issue.

Thank you,

Henry "Hank" Wilkins, IV

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Assistant Pro Tempore
District 5